

March 17, 2015

Re: Substitute House Bill No. 5321, Special Act No. 14-15; Raised Bill #6765: AN ACT CONCERNING INTERPRETER QUALIFICATIONS

To the members of the Human Services Committee,

My name is Mary Silvestri of Danbury, CT. I'm Deaf and have worked for 37 years as a Teacher of the Deaf and Hard of Hearing in Danbury area public schools. In addition, my three Deaf children, now adults, were educated in the Danbury public school system. We have all used interpreters. Without qualified interpreters, the educational system would not have been accessible to me as a professional and as a parent. It would not have been accessible for my children.

Therefore, I would like to express my support of Raised Bill #6765. But it should have an amendment (a new section 2) for an Interpreting Standards and Monitoring Board as recommended by the CRID Task Force on Upgrading Interpreter Standards.

As you are probably aware, the U.S Department of Justice and the U. S. Department of Education recently published (November 12, 2014) policy guidance on the issues of communication for deaf and hard of hearing students. Fortunately Connecticut already recognized the need for "...ensuring that an adequate number of qualified interpreters are available to assist students who are deaf or hard of hearing" and is actively working on this challenge.

Without a Standards and Monitoring Board, there is no way we can ensure that qualified interpreters are available, particularly as there is no Commission on the Deaf and Hearing Impaired to oversee our progress with this challenge.

On the webpage for the Human Services Committee, it states that you have "...

cognizance of all matters relating to the Department of Social Services and the Department of Children and Families, including institutions under their jurisdiction; the Office of Child Day Care; the Office of Protection and Advocacy for Persons with Disabilities; the Commission on the Deaf and the Hearing Impaired; and the Board of Education and Services for the Blind."

Please support the Raised Bill #6765 with the proposed Section 2 for a Standards and Monitoring Board.

Thank you.

Mary Silvestri  
Danbury, CT

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